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## CHANGES IN LAND VALUES, NUMBER OF FARMS, AND NUMBER OF TENANTS AND OWNERS SINCE 1900.\*

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Enough of the results of the Thirteenth Census of the United States has been given to the public concerning the present status of agriculture to warrant the first attempt at some general statements of movements or tendencies since 1900. In this brief paper I shall limit myself to the general farm information, and not refer to the data pertaining to crops or livestock.

The first item on which we have definite information is the total number of farms. A complete statement for a group of three states (Iowa, Illinois, and Indiana) shows a decrease in ten years of approximately 32,740 farms, or nearly 5 per cent. of the total number of farms in these states. This represents the movement in the large group of states in the upper Mississippi Valley; it is consistent in county after county, and is not confined to these three states. Indeed, if we divided the states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan, north of the three first mentioned, into two divisions by an east and west line, we could add the southern third of each of these states to the list already given. The same decrease in number of farms is noticeable. But there are many thousands of acres of undeveloped land in the northern part of these last-mentioned three adjoining states, and during the last decade settlement has continued in this new district, and hundreds of new farms are being established. This movement is so strong that the increases in the newer sections of these states completely conceal the decreases in the older sections. The total increase in number of farms for these states is 10,970.

Turning now to the reports for the New England states, we find that the number of farms reported for Maine, New

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Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island, and Connecticut (Massachusetts has not yet been reported) in 1900 was 154,170, while it is now reported (1910) as 150,900. This is a decrease of 3,270, or something more than 2 per cent. As in the case of the six states in the preceding groups, each of these states shows a decline except Maine. There is a slight increase in the northern part of that state (474 farms; or 0.8 per cent.). The same decreases are found in Pennsylvania and New Jersey; the former has decreased in number of farms 2.6 per cent., and the latter 4.3 per cent. Little has yet been published concerning the states where large increases are anticipated.

#### VALUE OF LAND.

A brief survey of the value of "land and buildings" and "land alone" in these states is equally interesting. Iowa shows the greatest gain,—117 per cent. Illinois follows with 99 per cent., and Indiana with 89 per cent. The same order maintains if we consider the change in value of land alone. In 1900 the land in farms of these three states (exclusive of buildings) was reported by their operators to be worth \$3,458-499,000. In 1910 the operators of the same land (there were 32,740 fewer farms, and the average farm was nearly six acres larger in each state) reported the land to be worth \$7,202,422,000—an increase of considerably more than 100 per cent. The other three states in that group—Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan—also show large increases in values reported. That for Minnesota land and buildings is 88 per cent.; Wisconsin, 75 per cent.; and Michigan, 54 per cent. Land alone in these states increased more than \$1,025,000,000. The total increase for these six states was \$4,769,002,000.

Turning to the New England States, we find the same upward movement along with the decrease in the number of farms. Land and buildings in Rhode Island increased 19 per cent.; in New Hampshire, 22 per cent.; in Vermont, 35 per cent.; in Connecticut, 40 per cent.; and in Maine, 64 per cent. The total increase in value of land alone was from \$196,535,000 to \$274,869,000, or nearly 40 per cent. This is less than half the rate of increase reported by the North Central States.

## OWNERSHIP OF LAND.

One of the most significant features of the reports now appearing pertains to the ownership of the land. The increase in the number of tenants had been so rapid between 1880 and 1900 that many predictions have been made relating to the changes during the last ten years. Each of the six states in the North Central group shows more tenants than in 1900. The following brief table shows the change:

| State.         | Number of<br>Tenants<br>1910. | Per Cent.<br>of all<br>Farmers. | Number of<br>Tenants<br>1900. | Per Cent.<br>of all<br>Farmers. | Increase<br>in<br>Number. | Value per<br>Acre of<br>Land, 1910. |
|----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Illinois.....  | 103,999                       | 41                              | 103,698                       | 39                              | 301                       | \$95                                |
| Iowa.....      | 81,837                        | 38                              | 79,736                        | 35                              | 2,101                     | 83                                  |
| Indiana.....   | 64,451                        | 30                              | 63,448                        | 29                              | 1,003                     | 62                                  |
| Minnesota..... | 32,748                        | 21                              | 26,755                        | 17                              | 5,993                     | 37                                  |
| Michigan.....  | 32,635                        | 16                              | 32,213                        | 16                              | 422                       | 32                                  |
| Wisconsin..... | 24,554                        | 14                              | 22,996                        | 14                              | 1,558                     | 43                                  |
|                | 340,224                       |                                 | 328,846                       |                                 | 11,378                    |                                     |

It is worthy of note that the largest percentage of tenants is found in Illinois, both in 1900 and 1910. In the same state is found the highest value per acre of land. The next highest percentage of tenancy, both in 1900 and 1910, is found in Iowa, accompanied by the next highest average value of land per acre. Indiana comes next in order in all respects.

It is also noteworthy that in these three states the decline in number of owners in ten years amounted to 14,039 in Illinois, 14,715 in Iowa, and 8,226 in Indiana, a total of 36,980, or 8 per cent., the total owned farms in these states in 1900 being 462,035.

Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan, with land valued at approximately half as much per acre, show approximately half as large a percentage of tenancy as Illinois, Iowa, and Indiana.

This close parallelism between number of tenants and value of land is very interesting, and a more detailed study of the problem is desirable. Before passing, it should be noted that any special study must also take into consideration: (a) the newness or oldness of the district; (b) the character of the industry; (c) the nationality of the farmers; (d) the original

land system and size of farms, etc. Thus, the presence of great numbers of Germans, Scandinavians, Swiss, Polanders, and other special classes of people in Minnesota and Wisconsin may be as significant as the lower land values or the newness of the country. Again, a study of the special situation in the tobacco and dairy districts of Wisconsin as compared with the wheat farming of Minnesota is essential to a complete statement. We must also remember in any explanation of the considerable increase in the number of tenants in Minnesota, that that was the state of bonanza farms, and that these are being broken down.

So many statements have appeared concerning the number of managers that it will be well to note in passing that in 1900 there were 10,473 managers of farms reported from these North Central states, while in 1910 the number had increased to 11,209, or 736 managers. Eleven thousand two hundred and nine managers out of 1,220,000 farmers is at best a very small item—less than one per cent. The change is almost negligible.

Turning now to the New England States, a wholly different situation presents itself. The following table should be of interest:

| State.           | Number of<br>Tenants<br>1910. | Per Cent.<br>of all<br>Farmers. | Number of<br>Tenants<br>1900. | Per Cent.<br>of all<br>Farmers. | Decrease<br>in<br>Number. | Value of<br>Land per<br>Acre, 1910. |
|------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Maine.....       | 2,536                         | 4                               | 2,775                         | 5                               | 239                       | \$14                                |
| New Hampshire..  | 1,864                         | 7                               | 2,185                         | 7                               | 321                       | 14                                  |
| Vermont.....     | 3,990                         | 12                              | 4,820                         | 15                              | 830                       | 13                                  |
| Connecticut..... | 2,565                         | 10                              | 3,467                         | 13                              | 902                       | 33                                  |
| Rhode Island.... | 936                           | 18                              | 1,108                         | 20                              | 172                       | 34                                  |
|                  | 11,891                        |                                 | 14,355                        |                                 | 2,464                     |                                     |

The most important feature is that each state shows a definite falling off in the number of tenants. The total decrease is 2,464, or 17 per cent. of all. It will be remembered that these states (except Maine) showed a decrease in the total number of farms of only 2 per cent. This decrease in the number of tenants is therefore remarkable, especially in the light of the predictions which have been made by some.